

Leighton Andrews AC / AM  
Y Gweinidog Addysg a Sgiliau  
Minister for Education and Skills



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref  
Ein cyf/Our ref

Christine Chapman AM  
Chair, Children and Young People Committee  
National Assembly for Wales  
Cardiff Bay  
CF99 1NA

29 November 2012

*Dear Christine,*

Thank you for your letter of 19 October requesting further information following the budget scrutiny by the Children and Young People Committee on 19 October. I have set out responses to the issues you raise and additional information as requested below.

### **School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Bill**

I note the concerns raised within the Committee report regarding the costs associated with school improvement guidance and local determination panels. However, the Committee report and recommendations provide no evidence that would indicate that the costs as set out within the Explanatory Memorandum are underestimated.

The projected cost (as set out within the Explanatory Memorandum) to implement statutory guidance for one priority policy area is estimated at £1.7 million. This estimate is based on work to support the School Effectiveness Framework and of course new guidance on other improvement areas may not follow the same pattern. Nevertheless, the principle that any significant implementation costs placed on schools or Local Authorities will be funded by the Welsh Government has been established and we will naturally be very mindful of cost implications when developing such guidance.

In respect of local determination panels I have made it very clear that I regard the suggestions made to the Committee by some witnesses regarding the scale of costs to be unduly pessimistic. I have also made it clear that I am content to report back to the Committee on both the operation and costs associated with these panels.

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay  
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*Wedi'i argraffu ar bapur wedi'i ailgylchu (100%)*

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## **Technologies used at Ysgol Y Bont in Anglesey**

A number of green technologies have been used at Ysgol Y Bont, these include:

- The walls are off-site constructed SIPS (Structural Insulated Panel System) system – providing increased insulation, minimizing site waste and reducing construction period.
- Green 'sedum' planted roof has been applied to almost half of the roof areas.
- Solar photovoltaic (pv) panels are in place.
- Solar water heating has been used for the hydrotherapy pool.
- High energy efficient LED lighting is in place throughout the school.
- Natural ventilation is in place for all internal spaces.

The committee mentioned ground source heating at the meeting, this has not been used at the school due to the restrictive site area.

## **Masters training programme funding**

The Masters training programme is funded from the Teacher Development and Support BEL, in the Teaching and Leadership Action within the Education and Standards SPA.

## **Minority Ethnic Achievement, Education of Travellers' Children and Tackling Disaffection grants**

The aim of the **Minority Ethnic Achievement Grant (MEAG)** is to raise the educational attainment of children and young people in Wales from minority ethnic backgrounds. This includes asylum seekers, refugees and the children of migrant workers. The MEAG amounted to £9.6 million in 2011-12, it increased to £10 million in 2012-13 and it is set to rise to £10.5 million in 2013-14. The grant is divided between all 22 local authorities and is used mainly to fund support for pupils who have English or Welsh as an additional language and specialist teachers and assistants. This year 38,204 children were eligible for support under the grant.

Although the majority of the funding is used to support language acquisition, local authorities do have the flexibility to use it for local projects aimed at particular learner groups who are under-achieving. One such project was the Raising Achievement Project, Somali (RAPS) project in Cardiff. RAPS runs supplementary activities, such as homework clubs, every day of the week at four different locations and 200 pupils are accessing them and benefitting from mentoring from 14 high schools. The project has been so successful in raising achievement, that beneficiaries now often have higher levels of attainment than their indigenous white counterparts. As a result the local authority felt this group was no longer a priority and recently took the decision to move funding to other needy projects.

Additional funding has been drawn down by matching the MEAG against the European Social Fund's (ESF) Priority 1 'Supplying Young People with Skills for Learning and Future Employment' programme which is targeted at young people aged 11 to 19. Nine local authorities are participating in the Minority Ethnic Language and Achievement Project which is expanding and adding value to existing services funded by MEAG. The project's budget is around £6 million and it will run until December 2013.

The aim of the specific grant for the **Education of Gypsy and Traveller Children** is to improve attendance and attainment and to encourage Gypsy and Traveller children to complete their secondary education. The grant stood at £900,000 in 2011-12; it has been increased to £1 million in 2012-13 and is set to rise to £1.1 million in 2013-14. This year it is divided between 18 local authorities and 2,045 children are benefitting.

The number of local authorities that apply for this grant each year varies depending on whether they are supporting Gypsy and Traveller learners. This year, for instance, Monmouthshire County Council applied under the grant for the first time. The increase in grant this year was the first for some time and it is true to say that, with rising pupil numbers and level funding for a number of years, some local authorities have been disappointed by the value of their grant awards. In these circumstances they may have felt that the service they could provide was restricted but there have been no known cases where a local authority has failed to bid and subsequently withdrawn support for Gypsy and Traveller learners.

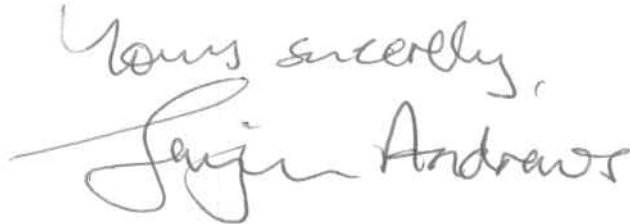
This grant has also been used as match funding to draw down ESF Priority 1 funding. A consortium of six local authorities attracted up to £2.3 million additional funding for a project which supported local Traveller Education Services in their work on attendance and attainment with secondary age Gypsy Traveller learners. The project closed in September 2012.

During 2011-12 the **Tackling Disaffection** budget primarily supported strategies aimed at improving behaviour and attendance at school. Activities included: specific grant to all local authorities (£300k) for teachers and support staff to train in behaviour management techniques; specific grant to 4 local authorities for behaviour pilots (£310k) to develop models of practice whose effectiveness can be shared across Wales with a view to local authorities and schools adopting elements which tie-in with their current approaches; staff costs (3 FTE - £165k) to take forward work on behaviour, attendance and looked after children; number of smaller projects including anti-bullying road-shows, evaluation of the exclusion process and the delivery, planning and commissioning of education provision for children and young people educated outside the school setting.

The behaviour management grant and the behaviour pilots ended in 2011-12. During 2012-13 the focus of this budget will be extended to support activities aimed at reducing the impact of deprivation on educational outcomes. Following the recent release of the 2011/12 secondary school absence statistics it is clear that the introduction of school banding and the development of the Attendance Analysis Framework have had a positive impact on the drive to improve school attendance. In order to maintain this momentum, it is intended that an element of this funding will be

targeted at consortia level; working to support the delivery of improvements to attendance in both primary and secondary schools.

I trust that this response is sufficient to answer the points raised.

Yours sincerely,  


**Leighton Andrews AC / AM**  
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